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their bloom and ripeness; can put them in a favorable light; his eye would become accustomed to the harmonious play of glittering colors; each year would give him a fresh opportunity of renewing the same models, and he would be enabled, without laborious abstraction, by means of quiet imitative observation, to know and seize the peculiarities of the simple existence of these subjects. In this way were produced the masterpieces of a Huysum and Rachael Ruysch, artists who seem almost to have accomplished the impossible. It is evident that an artist of this sort, must become greater and more distinguished, if in addition to his talent, he is also acquainted with botany; if he knows, from the root up, the influences of the several parts upon the expansion and growth of the plant, their office and reciprocal action; if he understands and reflects upon the successive development of leaves, fruit, flowers, and the new germ. By this means he will not only exhibit his taste in the selection of superficial appearance, but will at once win admiration and give instruction through a correct representation of properties. In this wise it might be said, that he had formed a style; while, on the other hand, it is easy to see how such a master, if he proceeds with less thoroughness, if he endeavors to give only the striking and dazzling, would soon pass into mannerism. Simple imitation also labors in the antechamber that leads to style. In proportion to the truth, care and purity, with which it goes to work, the composure with which it examines and feels, the calmness with which it proceeds to imitate, the degree of reflection it uses, that is to say, with which it learns to compare the like, and separate the unlike, and to arrange separate objects under one general idea,—will be its title to step upon the threshold of the sanctuary itself. If now we consider manner more carefully, we shall see that it may be, in the highest sense, and purest signification of the word, the middle ground between simple imitation of nature and style.—*Goethe.*

Correspondence.

Washington City, Jan. 21, 1855.

To the Editors of the Crayon.

I FIND any material of interest so scarce a commodity, that I am somewhat inclined to think that I should confer a greater favor by breaking my word, than by keeping it. The works of Art of the metropolis you are too familiar with to need any description by me, yet, for the sake of an early-love I formed for the pictures and statues in and around the capitol, I cannot forbear paying them some tribute in these my later, and, I hope, more mature years. I was quite a boy when I first saw the city of Washington, but I felt all the dignity and importance of a man, and I recollect how sincerely I wished that my round jacket, with its ponderous bell-buttons, could be converted into the more manly vestment, with its flowing skirts; and how I longed for some power, like the good fairy in Cinderella, to change my shiny patent-leather cap into a hat, such as a man ought to wear. Yes, I wanted to be a man then. But, oh, the change last week, as I stood on the same spot, and recollections of by-gone times came thronging around me. I would, then, that my boyhood's hours were back again, bell-buttons, blue round-about and all. But where am I wandering. I was about to tell you my feelings then, as I stood, for the first time, before the four pictures of Colonel John Trum-

bull. I am not quite positive, but I think I breathed. "Washington Resigning his Commission" completely absorbed me, and I fancied I could hear his touching words fall in solemn accents from his lips. I was then fresh from school, and the account of the whole scene, as related in "Grimshaw's History," was familiar to me. How I gloried over the surrender of Cornwallis, and admired the red waistcoat, and breeches of Jefferson, in "The Declaration of Independence," and considered them a triumph of Art and color. But now I regard them as fine paintings (for works of Art they cannot be called), with such a respect as you occasionally cherish towards some worthy old relative, whom you feel you ought to love, but do your best you can not. They are feeble representations of American Art, indeed the opinion of Trumbull himself, as expressed in a company of artists just after the completion of these pictures, is, perhaps, the truest and justest criticism that can be passed upon them: "I am," said he, "sick, and nearly out of patience with my work. I had hoped to make pictures, but imagine me scouring the country for the originals of my subjects—here an old portrait, there a recollection, then an original to be painted, with difficulties and impediments of every kind, and then to sit before your canvas to paint a picture as such. I was wearied with my efforts before I had commenced, and the result is an arrangement of portraits, which I trust are valuable, as being authentic likenesses." Old John R. Smith is my authority, and it was to him that the conversation was addressed. The "Baptism of Pocahontas," by Chapman, makes you regret that he ever painted it. His smaller works plainly indicate where his path lies. But Weir's "Departure of the Pilgrims" I have always liked, and it is a sorry compliment to call it the best work of Art in the Rotunda. It is solemn and full of feeling, and the rugged manliness of Miles Standish, saddened at the hour of departure, is worthy of any pencil.

Vanderlyn's "Columbus" is a tame, ill-arranged work: atmosphere, the picture is destitute of; all the distant figures are little Indians, and you are constantly reminded of Lilliputian territory, with Columbus and his retinue for a host of Gullivers. Poor Vanderlyn! I sigh as I write his name; but in his case, the battle was to the strong, for indolence and love of ease in the later years of his life gained the ascendancy, and in nothing is it more decidedly apparent than in his Columbus. The clock of the House of Representatives has always pleased me. It is not very original (don't smile at this qualification), but it is a pretty conceit and one of a delicate kind of fancy. You remember the design, doubtless. The figure is that of history in a winged car, the wheels constituting the dials of the clock, are rolling over the globe, while the figure, with pen in hand, stands, with listening ear, just ready to record the passing event. The group of Columbus and the Indian girl I cannot but consider an abomination. The great navigator, with the globe in his hand, has always been suggestive to me of a master of legerdemain, and the Indian maiden and myself seem momentarily expecting the opening of the ball, and the flying out of the bird. Persico's Peace is quite

a pleasant lady, and in her tameness rather descends into submission, which need not be an attendant on peace. As for her neighbor, Mars, he is well dressed in a new Roman suit. But with the uniform of the centurion there ends the resemblance. He has managed to wrinkle up a frown and would be very brave, but his knees knock with terror. It certainly is not the American ideal of War. Mills' bronze statue of Jackson was covered with frame-work, or rather partially so, the artist having men at work there engaged in taking a cast of the work, his first model having been lost in the destruction of his studio by fire. I cannot tell why it is, but most observers are pleased with Jackson. There must be something in association that adds a charm to it. It is pointed out to you as being made of the cannon captured and used by Jackson in his campaigns—and then the rearing position of the horse without apparent support of any kind, and so nicely balanced in his hinder feet. You may depend upon it, mere shameless trickery in Art will be more or less attractive, and I have no doubt that if a wire and ball could be attached to the horse, like the balanced toys of the shops, and an attendant to keep it in motion, it would be pronounced a triumph of Art, and Mills held forth as the great American sculptor who had added a motive power to statuary.

Through the politeness of Mr. Corcoran, whose gallery is usually open to the public, I had an opportunity of seeing some old and new acquaintances in the way of pictures. In a recess of the gallery is Power's "Greek Slave." Here is Leutze's "Amazon." Two of Gignoux's landscapes—one a summer scene, and the other one of the best winter pieces of this artist. A pleasant sketch, by Ranney, is here; a cattle piece, by Robbe, and a delicious little copy, by the same artist, after Achenbach; a fine original, by George Morland, pleased me much. It is one of the two only originals by this master that I have ever seen, and there has always appeared such an independence of manner in his treatment of his farm-yard subjects, that I have felt willing to forget their occasional coarseness for their direct truth. Huntington's "Mercy's Dream" is hung to great advantage, and shows better than I have ever seen it. Here are two of Cole's larger works. They, however, have changed much since I first saw them (now some years ago). The foliage is inky, and, except in the lighted parts, is wanting in the brilliancy of its first painting, yet, the atmosphere is as pure and rosy as ever. Mr. Corcoran's Gallery is not as large as I expected, and contains fewer first-rate pictures than I anticipated,—yet there are few you could well spare from the walls.

D. E.

THE man who is born to the possession of reason, is not independent of further culture, which he may receive from the care of friends and instructors, through quiet example of others, or harsh experience of his own. In the same way the artist is born, *progressive*, but not *complete*. He may bring a fresh eye to the world, may have a happy conception of form, proportion, movement; but in regard to higher composition, keeping, light, shade, color, his natural talents may be insufficient, without his being aware of it.